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S E R M O N
P R E A C H E D

Before the
Q U E E N,

A T
W H I T E H A L L,

Jan. 24. 1697.

By J. L A M B E, Chaplain in Ordinary to
Their M A J E S T I E S.

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L O N D O N,
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St. Paul's Church-Yard, 1691.

OLUFEN

A
SERMON
Preached before the
QUEEN.

TIT. II. X.

— *That they may adorn the Doctrine of
God our Saviour in all things.*

THE credit of any Institution of Religion, depends upon the happy Effects that it has upon the temper and lives of its Disciples. 'Tis true, to judge of a Religion by the Effects, may be contrary to the stricter Laws of reasoning, which oblige us, *à priori*, to consider the Authority of the Author, and to judge of the Religion it self by granted Principles of

Truth and Goodness. But because these considerations are too deep and close for common understanding ; therefore the eyes of the generality of Men will be fixed upon the lives and behaviour of its Profelytes, as the surest way of informing themselves in the Nature and Authority of the Religion it self. And by how much Christianity is a more Holy Institution than any other, by so much its Honour and Reputation in the World, does more depend upon the suitable Conversation of Christians ; because perverse and wicked Men will be so much the more unwilling to believe it, and will therefore more capriciously inspect the lives of Christians, that they may furnish objections against it, and reasons of satisfaction and comfort to themselves, in their Vice and Infidelity.

St. *Paul* therefore, though he justifies the Christian Faith, by Divine Authority, by the Power of Miracles, and the Gifts of the Holy Ghost ; yet He is especially solicitous, that it may be asserted and commended to the World by the suitable lives of the Disciples ; that both the Jews and Gentiles, when they observe it in the practice of it, may be perswaded, by this more easy and sensible conviction, that our
Saviour

Saviour was no Impostor, nor his Religion a Design; that the Profelytes of it do heartily believe it, because they have conform'd their Souls and Lives unto it, and exemplify those Excellent Vertues in their actions, which their Law requires, and which all men, by the common instincts of humane nature, admire and value.

And to this very purpose he wrote this Epistle to *Titus*, full of apposite Instructions concerning the Government, as well of Himself, as of the Clergy and Laity under His charge, with particular respect to the Reputation and Honour of the Christian Religion, as an end which he chiefly and more expressly here designs. For, Chapter the first, he obliges *Titus* to a Conscientious discharge of the Office of a Bishop, *that the Gainsayers may be convinced, v. 9.* The Clergy to Piety, Zeal, and Diligence, *that they of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you, Ch. 2. 8.* The Aged, the Widows, the Youth, and all other sorts of Men, That they exercise such Christian Graces as are proper to their respective stations, *that they may adorn the Doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.*

For the clearer illustration of this important duty,

duty, I shall briefly consider these Three things.

I. First, *The meaning of the Words.*

II. Secondly, *The nature of the Duty.*

III. Thirdly, *The reasons which oblige us, and the encouragements which may persuade us to the practice of it.*

IV. Fourthly and lastly, *I shall draw some Inferences from the whole.*

I. I begin with the first of these, *the Explanation of the terms, and shall consider,*

1. First, *What is meant by the Doctrine of God our Saviour.*

2. Secondly, *What by Adorning the Doctrine of God our Saviour.*

3. Thirdly, *Who are understood by they; or who are the subjects of the duty: That they may adorn the Doctrine of God our Saviour in all things. And,*

1. First, *By the Doctrine of God our Saviour, the Apostle understands the Christian Religion, or that institution of Faith and Manners, which the Ever Blessed Jesus taught and publish'd,*

Ph. 1. 27. when he was here on Earth. It is one, amongst many other general words, as the Gospel, the Word of God, the Faith, the New Testament, by which the Christian Religion is express'd in Scripture.

2. And

2. And secondly, To *adorn* the Doctrine of God our Saviour, is to advance the Credit and Reputation of the Christian Religion in the World. It is so to govern and demean our selves, that we may reconcile its Enemies to a good opinion of it; that we may procure, and even force regard and veneration towards it. The *Gnosticks* had disgrac'd the Christian Faith, by their seditious, sensual, and licentious Doctrines; some against the common interest of Society; as this, That Christians were exempt from Obedience to their Governours; That Christian Servants were, *ipso facto*, manumiss'd: Some against common honesty; as, That the Disciples might dissemble their Religion; or, if hardly press'd, Might apostatize in case of Persecution; that by a clearer light, it was revealed to them, That sensual lusts might safely be indulg'd. And hence our Religion was blasphemed, as a Doctrine that overturned the World, moved Sedition, and corrupted the People. And this was the occasion of this Epistle, in which the Apostle recites and recommends the principal Laws of Christian Life, for this very end, in a more especial manner, that the progress of the *Gnostick* Heresie might be prevented, the mouths of Ad-

versaries stopp'd, the honour of our Religion retrieved, and the Doctrine of God our Saviour in all things magnified, and adorn'd.

3. Thirdly and lastly, By the *They* in the Text, the Persons upon whom this duty is incumbent, we may fairly understand the whole Body of Christians. All that name the Name of Christ, let them *adorn the Doctrine of God our Saviour in all things*; for he presently urges a motive that is general, and which equally concerns all states and conditions of men whatever, v. 11. *For the Grace of God which bringeth Salvation, hath appeared to all men, teaching us to deny Ungodliness, and Worldly Lusts, and to live soberly, &c.* And thus much for the literal construction of the words.

II. I proceed, as I propos'd in the second place, to consider the nature, the acts, and exercises of the Duty it self, in what it consists, and when a Man may be said to *Adorn the Doctrine of God our Saviour in all things*. The Grace of God, says the Apostle, has appeared, has brought Salvation to us, has manifested a Divine Authority; we our selves pretend to believe it, we adore the Mystery, and are baptized into it: If this be so, then adorn the Religion ye profess, do it Honour, do it Right,
That

*That the sound thereof may go forth into all lands ;
that at the name of Jesus every knee may bow, Phil.*

2. 10.

Now the Doctrine of our Saviour is rightly divided into Articles of Faith , and Precepts of Life. I shall therefore consider, how a Man may adorn the Doctrine of God our Saviour.

1. *First*, As it is a rule of Faith.

2. *Secondly*, As it is a rule of Life.

1. *First*, As the Doctrine of our Saviour *is a rule of Faith*, or an institution of Religion, which we believe and own as of Divine Authority.

It has been always a great Objection against our Religion, that the wise impose it upon the credulous and easy multitude, as an useful instrument of Peace and Society , whilst these do but laugh at their folly, and make use of their Conscience of Religion to the advantages of Policy and Ambition. We shall therefore adorn our Religion, and do it honour in the World, if we shall manifest, beyond any reasonable exception, that we unfeignedly assent unto it, that we firmly believe it to be, what we pretend, of Divine Original. And this will be evident to all, If

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1. *First*,

1. *First*, Our Faith be perfect and intire. If we receive our Religion as it is in it self, in all its parts, in every Article, and in their plainest sence. To pack a Religion or Creed according to our own Affections, Interests, or Passions, is as easily discerned by others, as it is nauseous and contemptible in it self. There is nothing which we more detest than a Religious Cheat. Few are so patient as to consider that Religion soberly, whose Disciples are observed to prevaricate in their profession, to alter, change, extinguish, add or expound, as serves their interest: I do not say they should do so, but it is incident to humane nature to abhor the Religion it self, and the persons so abusing it, without any farther disquisition.

But if it be evident, that we embrace the truth in the Love of it, that we submit our Judgment and our Interests intirely to it, we shall cause it to be considered with Reverence and Respect: It is not easy to condemn the judgment of considerable numbers of Men, in all things else as wary and judicious as any other, whose understanding, interest, and affections, are subjected to this Religion. It is but natural to infer. that it must certainly have appeared with great Authority, or else it would
never

never have been received with such respect, sincerity, and self-denial.

2. Again, We shall adorn the Doctrine of God our Saviour, considered in general, as a System of Faith, or an institution of Religion which we receive, and own as of Divine Authority; if we are steady, firm, and constant in the profession of it. If we are grounded, and settled, and are not to be moved from the hope of the Gospel, as the Apostle speaks, Col. 1. 23. If we shall be so established, that when Tribulation cometh we shall not be offended, St. Mat. 17. 21. we shall then advance the Reputation and Honour of our Religion. Courage and Constancy are apt, in their nature, to provoke admiration, to remove prejudices, to beget an opinion of sincerity in the persons, of the weight and authority of the doctrine it self, which they so steddily confess. Forasmuch as no Man will suffer much for a School Question, or an indifferent Proposition. Thus Act. 26. v. 28. *The King, says St. Paul (when he was upon his Tryal for his Religion) knows these things, before whom I speak freely. And Agrippa said unto Paul, almost thou perswadest me to be a Christian: so great is the force of Constancy and Assurance.* Thus Act. 4. v. 13. *When they saw the*
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the boldness of Peter and John, they marvelled. It startled the Rulers and Judges, (for these are the they here) and the people glorified God for that which was done. Wherefore, though this be no infallible test of truth; yet, in effect, there always was, and ever will be, a regard, a deference to that Religion, which the Profelytes are content to attest with their Lives. But to change our Religion with our Interest, or for fear; to dissemble, coin, distinguish, and equivocate, reflects dishonour and contempt upon it. Who can consider it as any thing more than an humane invention, or an artifice of state, where they observe its Votaries, to use such a boldness towards it, as is inconsistent with the belief of its Divine Authority? But there were false Prophets amongst the people, says St. Peter; these were the Gnosticks, who taught the lawfulness of a dissembled Apostacy, in case of persecution, and many shall follow their pernicious ways, and what is the consequence? By reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. That is the second.

3. Thirdly and lastly, We shall adorn the Doctrine of God our Saviour, considered in general, as a system of Faith, or an institution of Religion, which we receive as of Divine Authority,

Authority, if we shall express an Affection, a prudent Zeal in the Profession of it. For by these we testify, not only our conviction of the truth, but a high satisfaction in the Religion it self. Zeal for Religion consists in a careful study of the Law it self, *that we may* ^{1 Pet. 3. 15} *be able to give a reason of the hope that is in us*; in a constant devout attendance upon all our Religious Rites, and solemn Services; in a vigorous endeavour, as much as in us lies, to propagate and advance it; to suppress Prophaneness, Heresie, and Schism in our place and station. It will be believed, that there is Divinity, and Worth in that Religion, that is so heartily embrac'd, and so well belov'd of its Disciples. But a coldness, an indifference to its honour and interest, will bring it into disrepute. Who will believe we esteem our Religion divine or pure, that observes so general a neglect of Religious Worship, such a bold licentious progress of Heresie and Schism, which every day gains more and more upon us. And thus I have considered how we may demean our selves in the *profession* of our Religion, that we may *adorn* it, that we may raise and support the reputation of it in the World.

2. I proceed, as I propos'd, in the second place, .

place, to consider how we may so order our Christian Conversation, that we may adorn the Doctrine of God our Saviour, *as it is a rule of Life and Manners.* And to this purpose it is absolutely necessary.

1. First, That our Obedience be Entire and Universal. For if we believe the Divine Authority of our Religion, it is not possible we should presume to pick and cull such duties only, as shall best agree with our interests and affections, because we are equally obliged to every part, and are taught, that *He that offends in one point is guilty of all.* And therefore if we believe, that our Religion was composed by infinite Wisdom, and will be required at our hands by Infinite Power and Justice, according to the tenour of the Law, it is not possible we should be guilty of such Presumption. So that a partial Obedience demonstrates our Religion to be humane, to be our own; not to be our rule, but our subject, which we govern as we please our selves; and therefore the Adversaries of it will abhor our pretences, and our Religion too. *Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law, says St. Paul, dishonourest thou the Law?* (by chusing some and neglecting other duties, as the Apostle himself expounds

expounds it,) *For the name of God is blasphemed amongst the Gentiles through you*, Rom. 2. 23. But besides, unless our Obedience be intire, the beauty of our Religion will be obscur'd. There is a connexion, a dependency of Christian Graces one upon another; wheresoever therefore the Chain is broken, there is a kind of inconsistency, an harshness, a disagreement. But if our Life shall be all of a piece, acted by one and the same Christian Principle in all things, we shall then lay open, and expose our Religion to view in its proper colours. We shall display its symmetry and proportion to the eyes of all men. *If thy whole body, says our Saviour to our present purpose, be full of light, having no dark part, the whole shall be full of light*, St. Luk. 11. 36. If no faculty be left unwrought upon, no evil affection unsubdued, if we are intirely united to our Religion, if we understand, believe, desire and act by the laws thereof, we shall advance its honour in the World; both our Religion and our Life will be the common object of respect and love. That is the first.

2. Secondly, That we may adorn the Doctrine of God our Saviour, considered as a Rule of Life, it is necessary that our Obedience be

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free and chearful ; that we part with our selves, with our own self-will, and sensual Appetites, without hesitation or complaint, not by constraint, but willingly. For such a ready practice, will express the Graces of our Religion more smartly, more to the Life : and those who observe it, will have reason to be in love with it for it self, and to be thoroughly reconciled to such a Yoke, which they find is so easy, so pleasant to those who bear it. *Do all things,* says the Apostle, *without murmuring, and without disputing,* let your Obedience be prompt and chearful, forward, and without regret, *that ye may be blameless, without rebuke in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, amongst whom ye then shall shine as lights in the World,* Phil. 2. 14, 15. That is the second.

3. Thirdly, We shall adorn the Doctrine of God our Saviour, considered as a Rule of Life ; if in cases doubtful we determine our practice on the side of the Law, and of our Duty. No institution of Religion can be so particular as to provide for all the circumstances of duties, because they are as infinite as the relations, means, and tendencies of things. If we therefore shall look beyond the letter of the Law, if we consider what is *Lovely, and of good*

good report, as well as what is barely *Just and Necessary* ; if we walk by the analogy of Faith ; if we endeavour *to be perfect as God is perfect*, to proceed from one degree of Grace unto another, we shall certainly bring our Religion into honour and esteem. It will be believed that we heartily embrace it, that we truly love it, when it is evident, that we have wholly resolv'd ourselves into it. By such a true Affection, by such a prudent Zeal, it will appear our choice, our delight, and our ultimate end, which cannot but subdue the prejudices of its Enemies. Who could withstand the power of our Religion, if it were thus sincerely and thoroughly imbib'd ? Whereas a shrivell'd, narrow Vertue, that stands upon terms with God, and considers how far we may indulge ourselves, without the violation of some great and notorious Law, dishonours our Religion, and depresses the credit of Christianity. How should it be thought any other than a tyrannous superstition, when it appears a disease, a burden, an abhorrence to the Disciples of it ? That is the third.

4. Fourthly and lastly, We shall adorn the Doctrine of God our Saviour, as it is a Rule of Life, by an eminent practice of some particular

lar Vertues, as of Mercy and Charity : where-soever these are express'd to the Life, habitually, bountifully, freely ; all that observe it, will esteem the Religion from whence such a Spirit flows. Who is not apt to favour his Opinions, whose Goodness is conspicuous, or who has done us any signal favours ? Is it not the common sentiment of all Mankind, that Religion is design'd to mend the World, to correct the roughness that is superinduc'd upon our nature, and the selfishness of our ends, to enlarge our spirits into a generous respect to each others good, to fix the Laws of our nature more close upon us, by the accession of Divine Command ? Wheresoever therefore the social Vertues, universal Love, a Catholick temper, humanity, mercy, bounty and a readiness to forgive, shine and are eminent, there our Religion will be honoured and esteem'd, as a Doctrine that is a publick blessing to the World. And thus *our Saviour commanded the multitude [five thousand persons] to sit down on the grass, and fed them, by a Miracle, till they were fill'd.* And what was the effect of this Miraculous Bounty ? Why, they were in love with such a Teacher, and said, *of a truth this is the Prophet which should come into the World,* St. Jo.

6. 14. And thus ye may see both the meaning, and the practice of this duty. And if we well observe these rules and measures I have now laid down, we may certainly know, whatsoever our calling, station, or profession may be, whether our Christian conversation is such as adorns the Doctrine of God our Saviour; nay, we may judge of every action we do, whether it tends to the honour of our Religion or no. Every Man that is honest and sincere, may easily apply these general Rules to any particular instance that shall be before him. For all that has been said is no more than this, That a Man that would render his Religion lovely and amiable in the World, must entertain it in all its parts and Articles, promote it zealously, confess it steddily, practise it chearfully, depart from his Liberty, in doubtful cases freely, in all his actions express a prudent Zeal, but above all, that he have *Fervent Charity*, that God in all things may be Glorified, 1 Pet. 3. 8.

And were our Religion received and practis'd according to these just directions, how would all the World be subdued and vanquish't by it? It would be the power of God to salvation, both to the *Jews and Gentiles*, 1 Cor. 1. 24. when
all

Mat. 7. 12.
22. 37.

all dissembling and equivocation, when all disguises and hypocrisie, when sullen selfishness, and private interest, shall be banished the dominions of this Religion; *when no man shall seek his own, but every one anothers weal*; when we shall *Love our Neighbour as our selves*, and do to others as we would they should do to us. How would Christendom be throng'd with those that would come from the furthest parts of the East, to behold the golden Age renewed, and to pay their respect to that Religion which has thus restored the beauty of the humane nature? And thus much for the Duty.

III. I proceed (but very briefly) to consider *the reasons which oblige us, and the encouragements which may perswade us to the practice of it.*

And all those Arguments indeed, which oblige us to believe and practise, according to the directions of our Religion in general, do as firmly bind us to such degrees of Faith and Vertue, as shall adorn it. For this is not a different duty, it is but the same thing in its just and proper measures; a more eminent Vertue, a more perfect Faith, a more excellent Life. But I shall only consider those at present, which appear more apposite and particular,

ticular, and they are these that follow.

1. First, To adorn the Doctrine of God our Saviour by such a Faith, and such a practice, as I have now describ'd, is the most infallible assurance, both to our selves and others, that our Principle is sincere and perfect.

It cannot be denied but there are degrees of *true* Faith, and *true* Vertue, and that the Religion of our Saviour is urged upon us by a double Sanction, by the joys of Heaven, and by greater degrees of that Joy. The former shall be the reward of sincere Obedience, though in a lower measure; the latter of a growing, abounding, perfect Faith and Life. But however, though we do not say it is impossible, yet a staggering Faith, a starv'd un-growing Vertue is very seldom true. For a Principle of true Religion is nothing less than a sense of the Divine Authority, Beauty and Goodness of the Law it self, an immoveable hope in the Promises, and a dread of the threatnings there delivered: And whosoever is affected in earnest with a sense of these things, will endeavour, by a natural promptitude, by a moral necessity, to pass from one degree of Grace to another, till he come to be perfect in Christ Jesus. Where can he stop who sincerely

cerely believes there is a Heaven before him ? This then is the test of true Religion, that we find our Faith grow stronger, temptations weaker, with a freedom, and chearfulness, in all Obedience to the will of God. *Whosoever hath this hope in him, purifies himself, even as he is pure, says St. John, 1 Epist. 3. 3.*

2. Secondly, Let us consider, that to live such a Life as shall cause our Religion to be esteem'd and honour'd in the World, is the greatest Blessing, as well to our selves, as others, that we can either imagine, or desire. For *He that converteth a sinner from the evil of his way, shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins, Jam. 5. 19, 20.* What can more excite our Emulation, than to stand in the place of the Apostles, to subdue prejudices, to mollifie hardned hearts, to work Miracles, to win Souls, and inlarge the Kingdom of our Saviour. That's the second.

3. The third encouragement to such a profession and practice of our Religion as shall adorn it, are the particular Promises which are made to those who shall attain unto it. The service is so eminent, that God has been pleased to encourage it by special Promises. *He that confesses me, says our Saviour, him will I confess,*

feſs, in a particular manner, before my Father, St. Mat. 10. 32. And again, When they reproach and perſecute you, Rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in Heaven, St. Mat. 5. 11, 12. In a ſteddy Confefſion, and a moſt Holy Life, there is an aſſurance of Faith, a Zeal, an affection to the ſervice of God, that is not common, even amongſt thoſe who are really good, and therefore it will be particularly conſidered. St. Paul departed from his Liberty for the ſake of the Goſpel, and reſuſed to accept of any maintenance from the people, 1 Cor. 9. *And doing this willingly,* ſays he, [*that is, without an expreſs command*] *I have a reward, v. 17. I ſhall have a particular conſideration for it.* But on the other hand, a moſt dreadful wo is denounced againſt thoſe, who, profeſſing the Chriſtian Religion, ſcandalize it, and cauſe it to be blaſphemed by the unſteadineſs of their Faith, or the debauchery of their Lives. *Offences will come,* ſays our Saviour, *but wo unto thoſe by whom they come. It were better that a miſtſtone were hanged about his neck, and he were caſt into the miſt of the Sea, Luk. 17. 1, 2.* That is the third.

4. The fourth and laſt encouragement to ſuch a profeſſion and practice of our Religion

as shall recommend it in the World, is the particular peace and satisfaction which will arise from such a Faith and Life. All dejections and interruptions of our Peace, are the Judgment of our Consciences against us, that we have yielded to temptations, that we have press'd upon our Vertue to preserve our Pleasures, or our Interest: But he that is grounded and settled in his Faith, steady in his hope of the Promises, habitual, zealous, and universal in the practice of his duty, will find his Peace as constant as his Principle, as inexpressible as his Love. *To relieve the distress'd with a bushel of wheat, is but common humanity, says Plutarch; but what excess of joy did Phidias and Theophrastus find in those extraordinary actions of theirs; when they delivered their Country from Tyranny and Oppression? (Lib. de Tranq.) The Testimony of our Consciences, that in simplicity and godly sincerity,* 2 Cor. 1.
32. *we have had our Conversation in the World, must needs be a Principle of great rejoicing.*

What expectation of Divine Assistance! What hope in difficulties! What Confidence at the hour of Death, will he certainly find, who can truly say, *Oh Lord remember how I have serv'd thee with a perfect heart! Thy Glory has been my principal aim and end, and thy Law my business and delight!* And

And thus I have explained the Duty, and considered the Motives which may excite us to the practice of it: It now remains, that we endeavour, upon the force of all that has been said, to subdue our own Self-will, and sensual Appetites, and devote our selves to the Obedience of God, to the service and honour of our most Holy Faith. That we study the Beauty, Worth, and Perfection of our Religion; the Goodness, Power and Faithfulness of the God we serve, *that we may walk worthy of our Vocation, Eph. 4. 1. That we may have our Conversation as becomes the Gospel, Phil. 1. 27. That we may stand compleat and perfect in all the Will of God, Col. 4. 12. That your light may so shine before men, that they may see your good Works, and glorifie your Father which is in Heaven, Mat. 5. 16. That at the dreadful day of Judgment, we may meet our Lord with Joy, and give him such an account of the Talents he intrusted us withal, as shall be received and passed, with, Well done good and faithful Servants, ye have been faithful over a few things, I will make you rulers over many things, enter ye into the Joy of your Lord, Mat. 25. 21.*

Which God of his Mercy grant, to every one of us, for Jesus Christ his sake the Righteous; to whom with the Father, and the Holy Ghost, be ascribed all Honour, Glory, Praise, Dominion, and Obedience, now and for evermore.
Amen.

FINIS.

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